

priest and period of office was nearly expired, they led a sacred embassy to priestess Delos, the birthplace of the divine brother and sister, where they *amf*^{Pono} superintended the musical and athletic contests and laid down the Artemis. priesthood.¹ At Rome no girl might be chosen a Vestal Virgin. At Rome unless both her father and mother were living;² yet there is no the Vestals evidence or probability that a Vestal vacated office on the death of Sam must a parent; indeed she generally held office for life.³ This alone may be the suffice to prove that the custom of entrusting certain sacred duties children to children of living parents was not based on any notion that who^{er}? orphans as such were ceremonially unclean. Again, the dancing alive at the priests of Mars, the Salii, must be sons of living parents; but as in date of the *fat*^{case} of the Vestals this condition probably only applied at the election. *ejectlorij* for *tley* seem *jjlce* the Vestals to have held

office for life. At all events we read of a lively old gentleman who still skipped and capered about as a dancing priest with an agility which threw the efforts of his younger colleagues into the shade.⁵ Again, at the public games in Rome boys of living parents had to escort the images of the gods in their sacred cars, and it was a dire omen if one of them relaxed his hold on the holy cart or let a strap Children of slip from his fingers.⁶ And when the stout Roman heart was living shaken by the appalling news that somebody had been struck, by employed lightning, that the sky had somewhere been suddenly overcast, or in expia- that a she-mule had been safely delivered of a colt, boys and girls tory ntes whose fathers and mothers were still alive used to be sought out and employed to help in expiating the terrific prodigy.⁷ Again, when the Capitol had been sacked and burned by the disorderly troops of Vitellius, solemn preparations were made to rebuild it. The whole area was enclosed by a cordon of fillets and wreaths. Then soldiers chosen for their auspicious names entered within the barriers holding branches of lucky trees in their hands; and afterwards the Vestal Virgins, aided by boys and girls of living parents, washed the foundations with water drawn from springs and rivers.⁸ In this

ceremony the choice of such children seems to be based on
the same
idea as the choice of such water^r ; for as running water is
deemed to

- ¹ Heliodorus, *Acthiopica* ^ l. 22. only at the time of
their entrance
- ² Aulus Gellius, i. 12. 2. on office is recognized by
Marquardt
- ³ Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Anti- (Romische*
Staatsverwaltung in.² 228,
quit. Rom. ii. 67 ; Plutarch, *JVuma*, note ¹).
10. We read of a Vestal who held ⁶ Cicero, *DC*
haruspicum response,
office for fifty-seven years (Tacitus, n.
Annals, ii. 86). It is unlikely that ⁷ Livy, xxxvii. 3 ;
Macrobius, *Saturn*.
the parents of this venerable lady were i. 6. 13 sq. ;
Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, 19
both alive at the date of her decease. (where the words
"patrimis matri-
⁴ Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Anti- misque pueris*
carmen inditite" are
quit. Rom. ii. 71. omitted from the text by H.
Peter).
- ⁶ Macrobius, *Sat.* iii. 14. 14. That ⁸ Tacitus, *Histor.* iv.
53. For the
the rule as to their parents being both sack and
conflagration of the Capitol
alive applied to the Vestals and Salii see *id.* iii. 71-75.